



COVID-19 INFORMATION

General advice on how to protect staff, volunteers and the people you serve?

- **Safeguarding your volunteers**

- Volunteers are considered as 'workers' under Work Health and Safety (WHS) Laws and as such should be afforded the same considerations as a paid employee. For information about coronavirus for employers please visit:

[COVID-19 Information for Employers – click here](#)

[COVID-19 Safe Work Australia Advice – click here](#)

- **Support self-care and strong communication for volunteers**

- Ensure volunteers feel supported to make decisions in their best interests around whether to continue to volunteer or not.
- It is recommended that you advise/speak with your volunteers about different ways of volunteering, for example continuing to volunteer remotely.
- If the organisation decides to suspend volunteer activities, commit to staying in regular contact with volunteers to keep them updated on latest developments.
- You may have some volunteers that also require support, try to establish mechanisms where they can continue to have the social connection they may have received through volunteering.
- When working from home support a socialising and promote virtual meetings and events to engage your team members.

- **Share the latest information from trusted authorities:**

- Use all your communication channels to provide clear information from trusted sources.
- Utilise posters and emails to promote hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette.

- **Promote social distance/working from home arrangements:**

- Encourage staff and volunteers to keep a social distance of 1.5 metres from one another. Promote handshake free greetings – people can wave and verbally greet each other instead.
- If possible encourage team members to work from home.
- Encourage virtual meetings when possible.
- Essential businesses and services still operating must adhere to restrictions on gatherings providing 4 meters square of space for each employee or attendee.



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- **When should volunteers not deliver services:**

- When they have travelled overseas in the last 14 days or have been in contact with someone who has travelled overseas
- If they have been in close contact with someone confirmed to be infected with COVID-19
- If they are unwell or have an acute respiratory infection (cold/flu, sinus etc)
- If they are feeling anxious or uneasy as things progress.

For information on how to best [Protect Yourself and Others - Click Here](#)

- **Set strict expectations on unwell staff and volunteers:**

- Communicate clearly the need for all unwell staff to stay at home. If a team member who is unwell comes into the office, ensure that they go home and seek medical attention if needed.

- **Promote hygiene practices and offer facilities:**

- Handwashing facilities should be available and well supplied. Provide soap, hand sanitiser, tissues and cleaning products around your buildings for staff, volunteers, clients and visitors.
- Promote hygienic practise, wash hands for 20 seconds: [Instructions](#)

- **Schedule cleaning regimes:**

- Frequently clean key areas including keyboards, desks and door handles.

- **Support your team working from home:**

- If possible support your staff and volunteers to work from home. Consideration should be given to the infrastructure, equipment and processes needed to allow your team to work remotely. These could include secure, remote access to your files, video conferencing and telephone facilities and guidance on working from home safely.
- When in the office implement safe distancing between colleagues eg 1.5m social distancing and 4m squared spacing between people.

Protect vulnerable groups:

- If your organisation works with people with weakened immune systems, older people, those with disabilities or those with long-term conditions like diabetes, cancer and chronic lung disease, it's important that you plan to limit their risk to



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being exposed.

- Consider time off for vulnerable volunteers and those who are understandably concerned about their health.

- **Cancel or postpone any public events, mass gatherings or in person meetings:**

- As per Federal Government instructions, all outdoor gatherings of more than 500 people and indoor gatherings of 100 people should not go ahead.
- For any gathering there must be 4 meters squared of space per person.
- You should also consider the viability of your smaller events, including training and meetings as you do not want to put anyone at unnecessary risk.
- It is advised that you postpone your event to a later date or encourage digital options for workshops and events if possible.

- **Hold meetings via video or tele conferencing:**

- Utilise video or tele conferencing for internal and external meetings, including board and committee meetings. As well as more a social means to stay connected to your team members.

- **Review travel risks and arrangements:**

- Reconsider the need for unnecessary travel. Maintain updated and clear advice for staff and volunteers.
- The latest information from [Smartraveller.gov.au](https://www.smartraveller.gov.au) is to not travel overseas during this time.

Look after physical and mental health and wellbeing:

- If your team is working from home encourage them to be physically active during the day and to stay in touch with their colleagues through email, phone/video conferencing and social media (as appropriate).
- As the situation progresses the strain on mental wellbeing will increase. It is extremely important that you take care of yourself and stay connected to your staff and volunteers during these times. Remind yourself and them to take time to switch off from all things COVID-19 and focus on things they can control, stay connected to one another through video and teleconferencing. Encourage social aspects such as general catch ups and casual Friday afternoon catch ups.



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- **Record key contacts:**
 - Ensure all emergency contact details are up to date

Stay informed:

We hope this has given you a starting point for planning your COVID-19 response. We encourage you to continue to follow health and safety guidelines as advised by appropriate and relevant authorities:

- [New South Wales Government](#)
- [Australian Government Department of Health website](#)
- [World Health Organisation website](#)

References + Credit: Thank you to Volunteering Queensland and Volunteering Tasmania for their support in developing this resource & information gained from NCVO (The National Council for Voluntary Organisations).